



Census and Economic Information Center

Montana Department of Commerce

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MONTANA

2006 County Personal and Per Capita Income

As the decade progresses, Montana's economy is picking up speed. Between 2001 and 2002, Montana's personal income rose 2.1%. Between 2005 and 2006, the growth rate increased to 6.8%. Per capita income, a measurement of wealth, also rose faster in 2006 than 2001, 5.5% and 1.6% respectively. Each Montanan earned \$30,790 in 2006, up from \$24,676 in 2001.

Fueling this spike in income is two of the Treasure State's treasures, oil and gas. In 2006, Richland County pumped 58% of all oil and 13% of all gas in the state and accounted for 38% of all oil and gas production taxes collected. The county received over \$30 million in these production taxes in 2006. Personal income growth in the county was a negative 1.6% in 2001 then soared to 12.1% in 2006.

Petroleum County, the least populated county in the state at 463 in 2006, turned a 19.3% decline in 2001 into a 2.5% increase in 2006. Farm earnings declined slightly from \$2,081,000 to \$2,046,000 between 2001 and 2006. A 26% increase in income for state and local governments is responsible for the majority of the increase in personal income in the county.

Despite the high prices for agricultural commodities, many of the farming counties realized smaller farm earnings in 2006 than 2001. In Valley County, a major grower of spring wheat, flaxseed and dry peas, farm earnings fell 65%. Included in these earnings are farm expenditures on such products as gasoline and diesel. The cost of diesel nearly doubled in this time period while gasoline jumped 79%. None of the commodities in the county realized such sizeable increases in their prices.

Big Horn County realized a 3.1% decline in personal income in 2006 compared to a 1.6% increase in 2001. Behind the decrease in income is the decline in farm earnings, 88% between 2001 and 2006.

The following table provides data for personal income and per capita income for the top and bottom performers in the state.

County	Personal Income: Percent Change		Per Capita Income: Total Amount	
	2001-2002	2005-2006	2001	2006
Valley	3.1%	- 3.5%	\$25,116	\$30,258
Big Horn	1.6%	-3.1%	\$16,065	\$29,449
Petroleum	-19.3%	2.5%	\$19,341	\$21,948
Richland	-1.6%	12.1%	\$23,181	\$32,887
Montana	2.1%	6.7%	\$24,676	\$30,790

Personal income is the income received by all persons from all sources and is a proxy for how well an economy is doing. Per capita income is personal income divided by population. The [Bureau of Economic Analysis](#) tracks the various measures of income for the nation, state and county.

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